

ANNOUNCEMENTS events

YO SAN UNIVERSITY OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE IS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE FALL 2004 TRIMESTER. To set up an appointment to see the school, please call (310) 577-3000.

TAO OF WELLNESS IS HAPPY TO INTRODUCE OUR REDESIGNED WEBSITE. www.taofwellness.com

To receive our quarterly newsletter, subscribe online.

ARCHER SCHOOL CAREER DAY AT TAO OF WELLNESS

Dear Tao of Wellness,
Thank you so much for showing us all of the hard work it takes to run an acupuncture clinic. I especially enjoyed the herb room. It was so much fun tasting, smelling, and feeling the herbs. Thank you so much again. Sincerely, C.A.



Thank you so much for letting us come to that Tao of Wellness and explore a different type of medicine. I found Chinese medicine so interesting and loved getting to see and work in the herb room. I had a great time! Thanks! O.B.L.



Dear Adriana & Heather,
Thank you so much for showing us around the Tao of Wellness and teaching us about acupuncture and herbs. It was incredibly interesting and enjoyed it a lot. Thanks so much, E.H.

FIRST AID — LITTLE SECRETS IN THE KITCHEN



DR. XIAOMEI CAI

We have all experienced some physical accidents in our kitchen, which need immediate assistance. Sometimes we have to suffer from them because we have very little self-rescue training ideas that can prevent injuries from worsening or help them heal faster. The following are some home remedy secrets I want to share with you.

■ BURNS
For minor burns, I suggest applying a few drops of sesame oil to the affected area, sprinkling some salt on top of the oil. Leave it on for a few minutes. If you still experience a burning

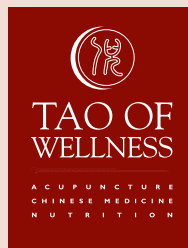
sensation, re-apply oil and salt mixture to the burn. This mixture stops the burning pain and helps decrease swelling to prevent blistering from occurring. For large, severe burns go to the emergency room.

■ FOOD POISONING
Some food poisoning symptoms include nausea and vomiting. Mung Beans are very helpful in alleviating these symptoms. Cook 1 cup of mung beans in 6 cups of water for 30 minutes or grind 1/4 cup of mung beans and stir into 2-3 cups of distilled water then strain the tea and drink several times a day. If you have stomach pain or cramps, cook 10 slices of ginger root in 2 cups of water for 5 minutes then drink it all.

■ COMMON COLD
When you are exposed to a very cold environment or feel

chills, to prevent from coming down with a cold, cook 5 slices of ginger and 2 whole, uncut stalks of green onions in 2 cups of water. Cover the pot and cook for 5 minutes on a medium flame. Drink tea hot and if possible, take a nap afterwards. Slight perspiration should be expected to disperse the cold.

■ CHRONIC DIARRHEA FOR CHILDREN
Since adults bodies are much more complex than children, the following remedy is most effective for children. Simply stir fry 1 cup of dry, white rice in a skillet, stirring constantly until golden brown then add 6 cups of water and simmer for 30-40 minutes on low heat. Have children eat a small bowl of porridge daily for 2-3 days. For younger children, feed them the broth portion of this porridge only.



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ARCHER SCHOOL CAREER DAY

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A HEALING STORY

by Alicia Sky Varinaitis-Kunerth



three months after surgery

“You have a brain tumor.”

At age 30 and eight months pregnant with my first child, it was the last thing I expected to hear out of the doctor’s mouth. I had never been sick or dizzy. Had never felt nauseous or woozy or had headaches. One day, without explanation or forewarning, I began to have grand mal seizures. Mark, my husband of two years, was the one who found me in our home office, seizing. He called 911 and I was rushed to the emergency room. A pregnancy condition called Eclampsia was first suspected, but after two brain scans, we were told that the cause of the seizures was a golf ball sized tumor in my left frontal lobe. I remember thinking, “This isn’t happening. This can’t be real.”

I was immediately admitted into the High Risk Pregnancy Ward at Encino-Tarzana Hospital, where I stayed for six weeks until the birth of our beautiful daughter, Ashlyn Pearl. Seven days later, having recovered enough from the c-section delivery, I was transferred to Cedars-Sinai Hospital for brain surgery. A wonderful surgeon, Dr. Keith Black, did an amazing job removing the tumor. Afterwards, he informed my husband that the surgery had gone “very well” and that he was confident he had “gotten everything he could see.”

One week later, Mark and I were in Dr. Black’s office to review the tumor’s biopsy results. With hopes of “please let it be nothing” floating around in our heads, we were floored by the results. The tumor was classified as a Grade IV Glioblastoma Multiforme. The doctor’s exact words were, “These types of tumors are incurable...” My first thought was, “I won’t see my daughter take her first steps.” Sorrow, grief, heartbreak, despair – it’s hard to accurately describe what we were feeling. To their ultimate credit, the doctors handling my case were always extremely positive and quick to

remind us that although the tumor wasn’t curable, it was highly treatable. I was young, in good health and a woman – three factors that put me way ahead of the norm in terms of life expectancy. The ordered course of treatment: Seven weeks of daily radiation done concurrently with monthly oral chemotherapy.

Even though I knew that the radiation and chemotherapy would be hard, I was extremely surprised at how much the treatments drained me. The medications I was taking made it unsafe to nurse my daughter and they also made me too tired to stay awake through a single bottle-feeding. I was spending most of my days knocked out in bed just trying to keep down chicken broth and crackers. And, due to the intense radiation treatments, I was losing my hair. I still remember the day I was in the shower and chunks of my hair just began falling out. I didn’t even have to pull. That was the day it hit me, “I’m truly sick.” I was weak, exhausted and overcome by depression. Despite all the books I read about positive mind over matter, I couldn’t find the energy or the will to even begin to battle the cancer.

“The ‘Western Medicine’ approach to my disease was slowly obliterating my life. It would take something powerful to turn my life around. That was when a friend told me about the Tao of Wellness.”

continued on next page

A HEALING STORY *continued*



five months after surgery

My friend was being treated by Dr. Mao for an especially severe case of lymphoma. I will readily admit I was a skeptic of Eastern medicine, including acupuncture. I didn't see how small pins poked into the skin could amount to anything substantial. So, I don't know exactly what it was – perhaps my friend's copious enthusiasm or perhaps I was just too tired to protest – but I am so enormously grateful I agreed to meet with Dr. Mao.



eight months after surgery

Dr. Mao prescribed a combination of a healthy diet, herbs and acupuncture which helped tremendously (and immediately) with my never-ending fatigue and nausea. I was able to keep food down, which meant I started to gain weight, which in turn helped me to grow physically and emotionally stronger. I learned to meditate, which cleared my mind for powerful healing sug-



nine months after surgery

gestions. I found I was no longer held hostage by the fear of dying. I couldn't necessarily quantify my positive reaction to the treatment in physical, easy to see terms, but I felt better on the inside. And that made all the difference in the world.

About three months after I started with Dr. Mao, I had a follow-up exam with my radiation oncologist. I thought that after the radiation treatments were complete, my hair would return. The hair not affected by the treatments had started to grow, but I still had a very large, noticeable bald spot on the left side of my head. It was funny how much I resembled my infant daughter – both of us had a ring of hair around the base of our skull, but the top of our heads was smooth. During the exam, I asked when I should expect my hair to return. She paused, I think cautious of my fragile emotional state, and said gently, "The radiation levels your tumor required were very intense. The hair follicles in that area are most likely destroyed."

Looking back, I should have hit my knees in thankfulness for the technology that could burn away any remnants of cancer cells that surgery had left behind, but in truth I was devastated. It's hard to gauge the progress of your healing unless you can look at yourself and see actual positive changes. Without my hair, I looked sick. Since I looked sick, I felt sick. My doctor was saying my hair would never grow back. Who was I to dispute her educated assessment?

Later that day, Dr. Mao walked into the treatment room to find me sitting on the table, weeping. I could barely speak, I was crying so hard. Upon hearing what my doctor had told me he said, "You must never listen to doctors – not even me. Every single person is different. No one can tell you what your body will and will not do." He then brought in a small bottle of herbal liquid and told me, "Scrub this on your head with a toothbrush twice a day. It will make your hair sprout." I took the liquid home and did what Dr. Mao had told me to do. About three weeks later I couldn't believe my eyes. There were actual "sprouts." My hair was growing back! About six months later I returned to the oncologist that had deemed my head a barren wasteland and she was stunned. She

even wondered out loud (jokingly, let's hope) if she had administered the correct dosage of radiation. Six months after that I had my first real full-head-of-hair haircut. That was a great day.

Dr. Mao's advice not to take everything a doctor says to heart was profound. And I truly believe the brown herbal formula he prescribed regenerated my hair follicles. But it was a simple story he told that day that gave me the inspiration to start reliving my life. He told me to be happy because I looked like a Buddhist monk. I wasn't in a place where I could joke about my baldness, but Dr. Mao insisted he wasn't teasing. He asked, "Do you know why Buddhist monks shave the top of their heads?" I did not. He told me, "It makes them closer to God."



One year after surgery

Closer to God.

That was what I had come to Dr. Mao to hear. Instantly, all my sadness and fear about being bald for the rest of my life melted away. It was what I had been praying for all along. I needed to hear that God was by my side, battling my disease with me. I accepted, truly for the first time, God's will instead of my own.

In July of this year, I will be two years cancer free. I believe I am cured. If ever an MRI shows any tumor re-growth, I feel confident I will beat it. And if I don't and it is my turn to pass from this life, I will not fear the unknown. I will embrace it. Thanks, in large part, to Dr. Mao. ■

avoiding ENVIRONMENTAL TOXINS



HEATHER SCHIFFKE

Many of us are concerned about the adverse health effects of environmental pollutants such as agricultural pesticides and industrial chemicals. In recent years, there have been bans on certain chemicals, as well as ongoing research into the effects of others. The federal government took a major step when they implemented national standards for organic produce in October 2002.

While the specific health effects of most pesticides and environmental toxins have not yet been established, the research to date indicates that low dose exposure to industrial chemicals and pesticides does present a significant risk to human health.

Endocrine and nervous system disorders, as well as many cancers, are just some of the health problems that have been linked to long term, low dose chemical exposure.

The idea that organic produce is healthier than produce grown with agricultural chemicals has mostly been based on the absence of environmental toxins rather than a higher nutritional profile. But could organic produce also have additional health benefits that produce grown with pesticides is missing? According to UC Berkeley, a recent study found organic fruits and vegetables to have more phytochemicals than conventionally grown produce (produce grown using pesticides.) Phytochemicals are naturally occurring plant chemicals that have numerous health benefits. One theory behind this interesting discovery is that phytochemicals act as the plant's natural pesticides. When synthetic pesticides are used, the plant has less need to produce its own defenses and thus produces less phytochemicals.

In a perfect world we would eat only organically grown foods with their abundance of healthy phytochemicals and absence of toxic residues. Unfortunately, it may not always be possible to choose organic produce. The Environmental Working Group, a non-profit environmental research organization, has developed the "Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce." This is a handy guide to which produce items are highest and lowest in pesticides, so that if you are unable to buy organic, you can at least make informed decisions about the conventionally grown produce that you consume. For more information visit www.foodnews.org

PRODUCE HIGHEST IN PESTICIDES:

APPLES
BELL PEPPERS
CELERY
CHERRIES
GRAPES (IMPORTED)
NECTARINES
PEACHES
PEARS
POTATOES
RED RASPBERRIES
SPINACH
STRAWBERRIES



PRODUCE LOWEST IN PESTICIDES:

ASPARAGUS
AVOCADOS
BANANAS
BROCCOLI
CAULIFLOWER
CORN (SWEET)
KIWI
MANGOES
ONIONS
PAPAYA
PINEAPPLES
PEAS (SWEET)

In addition to awareness of chemicals in your produce, there are many other simple steps you can take to avoid exposure to environmental toxins:

REDUCE YOUR CONSUMPTION OF PROCESSED FOODS.

Processed foods usually contain additives and preservatives as well as being lower in nutrients than their whole food counterparts.

REDUCE YOUR CONSUMPTION OF MEATS AND HIGH FAT DAIRY PRODUCTS.

Because toxins accumulate as you go up the food chain, replacing meat and animal products with whole grains, beans, soy products, fruits and vegetables will also reduce your exposure to environmental toxins. This is not to say that you need to follow a vegetarian diet, but consider reducing your overall intake of animal products.

MICROWAVE YOUR FOOD IN GLASS OR CERAMIC CONTAINERS

rather than plastic to avoid leeching of chemicals into the food.

REDUCE THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS THAT YOU USE.

Look for the biodegradable alternatives widely available in health food stores. Use non-toxic cleaning products, such as baking soda, that are already in your home. Many companies that sell environmentally-friendly cleaning products have great cleaning tips on their websites.

REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS AND COSMETICS THAT YOU USE.

These products may contain harmful chemicals. You can also look for products that contain non-toxic alternatives. However, be aware that the term "organic" is not regulated on non-food items and "natural" doesn't always indicate a better product. Read the labels and see how many ingredients you recognize. ■